

ABSTRACT

The invention provides chain-coupled polymeric sulfide compounds for use as the elastomeric component in vulcanizable elastomeric compositions comprising silica, carbon black or mixtures thereof. In particular, the invention provides anionically polymerized polymers having polymer chain living ends that are functionalized with sulfide groups and coupled together by a metal or nonmetal atom. The chain-coupled polymeric sulfide compounds have an initial high viscosity for ease of handling prior to compounding, a stable viscosity during storage, and a decreased compound viscosity for better filler dispersion and improved mixing efficiency. The invention further provides a pneumatic tire having at least one component produced from the vulcanizable elastomeric composition of the invention. A tire tread produced from vulcanized elastomers exhibiting these improved properties will exhibit reduced hysteresis resulting in an increase in rebound and improved rolling resistance and wet traction.

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